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United States
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Selected Speeches and News Releases

June 4 - June 10, 1992

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Remarks

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

by Dr. H. Russell Cross, United States Department of Agriculture,
Food Safety and Inspection Service, June 10.

BEEF SAFETY—A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

When I became Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, I made a commitment to Secretary Madigan and to the public to put this agency on a strong scientific footing in connection with programs to protect the public health. My commitment is stronger than ever.

Part of that process began when we committed to shift to an inspection emphasis on bacteria that can cause disease. This began with the announcement in March that we would take steps to begin collecting data to provide a microbiological food safety profile for beef with programs to follow for all meat and poultry. That commitment continued when we commissioned a 7-member External Scientific Team to review the safety status of the Streamlined Inspection System (SIS)-Cattle pilot plants versus traditional beef slaughter plants. SIS is one approach FSIS has proposed to modernize traditional inspection at cattle slaughter plants.

The results of that review will be discussed momentarily by the panel's chairman, Dr. Philip Alm. The panel informed the Secretary on Monday that some of the plants involved in the SIS pilot program have made innovative contributions to fight potential bacterial contamination that we did not envision when we began this modest project. Data from some of those plants have shown significant reduction in pathogens because of these systems. This is important because the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reports that more than 90% of the food borne illness cases have been linked to bacteria which can rapidly multiply by improper food handling.

Based on the recommendations from this panel, key National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recommendations, and deliberations from within USDA, we will accelerate the process of building more science into this nation's cattle inspection systems. These programs will eventually become the standard for all meat and poultry inspection programs. This process will involve:

- FSIS will expand its inspection and safety assurance procedures in those plants that wish to maintain their current quality control and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) programs. HACCP is a process control system that identifies “critical” points in the food production process that should be controlled to prevent food safety hazards from occurring. Within 30 to 60 days, I will staff these plants with an additional inspector for each shift to conduct final checks on plant quality control systems. This expansion into quality control/HACCP programs will be strongly encouraged throughout the industry.
- The active promotion of the adoption of quality control and HACCP programs to focus on meat safety backed by hard scientific evidence. One of the key findings from Dr. Alm’s team is that the plants pilot testing the SIS-C system have effectively developed quality control and HACCP programs focused on microbial safety.
- We will accelerate the adoption of the newest, most effective and safest prevention systems that will effectively lower the harmful bacteria on meat. We will strongly encourage the use of microbial testing in the industry’s quality control and HACCP systems.
- As we move into these new modes of slaughter inspection, I will seek much more input from the inspectors in the field on designing future inspection programs.
- With these shifts towards more science, I will also commit to more training and much more emphasis on the principles of total quality management.
- FSIS will continue to inspect every carcass, as the law requires. Traditional inspection focuses on the defects that can be seen, such as visible contamination and symptoms of animal disease. As we strengthen the scientific basis of meat inspection, we must accelerate our efforts against the defects that we cannot see—such as harmful bacterial that cause food borne illness.

On May 1, following a televised allegation of unsafe meat, Secretary Madigan called for several actions to confirm food safety at SIS-plants. The USDA Inspector General has reported to the Secretary that his investigators saw FSIS personnel stopping the line until unsanitary conditions were corrected, and condemning potentially unsafe meat. They were also able to confirm that inspectors were present when the media

personnel—posing as inspectors—were working in the processing area. The Secretary also requested assistance from ABC News in investigating these allegations. Unfortunately, ABC would not share their information on the details of the material that they used in their program. They did share the memo cited in the investigation, which was a normal, routine memo sent in advance of the headquarter reviews of pilot plants. FSIS roving teams have reviewed nearly 60 cattle plants to ensure proper procedures are in place. We have also begun reviews of all defect criteria applied during inspection to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe and wholesome.

Let me reemphasize that inspection modernization will not reduce the number of inspectors performing our vital mission, as critics inside and outside the Agency have repeatedly claimed. Rather the initiatives I've detailed today provide opportunity for advancement to our inspectors in the form of enhanced job skills and upward mobility. It's time for our workers to meet and benefit from the challenges modernization provides.

Let me repeat: FSIS is committed to the move to a riskbased inspection system. Our ultimate goal is universal adoption of the HACCP system in all phases of food production. The first major step was taken when we committed to obtaining baseline microbial data for meat and poultry. After the hazards have been identified, the next step is to reduce those hazards. The emphasis we intend to place on strong prevention systems coupled with effective industry and a USDA safety assurance system is the next step in that process. Eventually, we will have the data to associate "risk" with these hazards and we will be able to effectively develop microbial guidelines.

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

USDA TO ELIMINATE CLEARCUTTING AS STANDARD PRACTICE ON NATIONAL FORESTS

WASHINGTON, June 4—Clearcutting will no longer be a standard way of harvesting national forest timber under a proposal announced today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“The new policy will limit clearcutting to areas where it is essential to meet forest plan objectives, such as establishing habitat for endangered species of wildlife,” said USDA’s Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson.

Robertson said the proposed clearcutting policy is part of a more ecological approach to management of the Forest Service’s 191-million-acre national forest system.

Clearcutting is a harvest method in which all trees are removed at the same time from a site. It is used primarily to reforest tree species which require full sunlight to grow and to create habitat for certain kinds of wildlife, such as deer and elk.

“Although it is a proven forest management tool, clearcutting has become increasingly controversial on national forests because of its appearance and impacts on other resources,” Robertson said. “The new policy addresses public concerns and expands current efforts to decrease the use of this harvesting method on national forest lands.”

Current regulations, established under the National Forest Management Act of 1976, limit national forest clearcuts to 40 acres or less except for Douglas-fir, southern yellow pine, and Alaskan hemlock-sitka spruce forests where they may be larger. In the past few years, the Forest Service has decreased the number of clearcuts and substituted more visually acceptable harvest methods, Robertson said.

In 1988, clearcutting was used on 310,000 of the 728,424 acres of national forest that was harvested.

“The new policy, in conjunction with the Forest Service’s new ecological approach to land management, can reduce clearcutting by as much as 70 percent from 1988 levels,” Robertson said.

In 1990, the Forest Service initiated a program, called New

Perspectives, to practice more environmentally sensitive forestry. This approach calls for greater use of harvesting methods that leave green trees and downed woody material on site.

The proposed reduction in clearcutting may reduce timber yields on national forests by about 10 percent in the short run, Robertson said, and there will be some increases in timber sale costs.

“However,” he said, “we believe the long term environmental and esthetic benefits of reduced clearcutting and its accompanying controversy will outweigh any possible short term losses. Judicious use of alternative harvest methods such as selective cutting can be substituted for clearcutting on most national forest areas. And, in the long run, timber yields will be about the same.”

Under the proposed policy, clearcutting would no longer be allowed as a standard commercial harvesting practice. Instead it would be allowed only under one or more of the following circumstances:

1. To establish, enhance, or maintain habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.
2. To enhance wildlife habitat or water yield values, or to provide for recreation, scenic vistas, utility lines, road corridors, facility sites, reservoirs, or similar developments.
3. To rehabilitate lands adversely impacted by events such as fires, windstorms, or insect or disease infestations.
4. To preclude or minimize the occurrence of potentially adverse impacts of insects or disease infestations, windthrow, logging damage or other factors affecting forest health.
5. To provide for the establishment and growth of desired trees or other vegetative species that are shade intolerant.
6. To rehabilitate poorly stocked stands due to past management practices or natural events.
7. To meet research needs.

Andy Fisher (202) 205-1055

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USDA PERMITS ADDITIONAL MEXICAN PORK PRODUCTS TO TRANSIT U.S. PORTS

WASHINGTON, June 4—Fresh, chilled, or frozen pork or pork products from Sonora, Mexico, can be moved through the United States for export to other countries, effective immediately, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official announced today.

“Shipping certain swine and pork from Mexico through the United States had been prohibited because of hog cholera in Mexico,” said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator for veterinary services in USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

“Because Mexican animal health officials recently recognized Sonora as being free of hog cholera, we no longer believe pork and pork products from there present a high risk of transmitting the disease,” Johnson said.

Sonora has taken precautions to ensure its swine do not become infected with hog cholera, a serious disease of swine, Johnson said. The state bans importation of swine and pork from foreign countries and other Mexican states affected with the disease. Sonora also is geographically isolated from surrounding regions by the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Gulf of California.

Pork and pork products in transit from Sonora must meet rigorous shipping and handling requirements, including placement in sealed containers under Customs bond, Johnson said.

Exporters also are required to obtain an APHIS permit and notify port personnel of a shipment’s arrival date and transit route.

“By facilitating export opportunities for the Mexican pork industry, we hope to provide incentives for other infected Mexican states to continue their efforts to eradicate hog cholera,” Johnson said.

The revised regulations were published as a proposal in the Jan. 31 Federal Register, and written comments were accepted until March 2. The final regulations are being published in the June 5 Federal Register as docket 91-045-2.

Beth Hulse (301) 436-4892
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UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE FOOD AID TO ZIMBABWE

WASHINGTON, June 4—Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman today announced the United States will provide \$15 million in food assistance to Zimbabwe under Title I of Public Law 480—the Food for Peace Program.

“This aid will allow purchases of approximately 84,000 metric tons of U.S. corn and 10,000 metric tons of edible vegetable oil, which will help Zimbabwe meet its food needs,” Veneman said. “It shows our continued commitment to assisting the government of Zimbabwe as the country struggles through the effects of what is possibly the worst drought in southern Africa in generations.”

Veneman said PL-480 assistance also is important to U.S. agriculture because it helps establish and maintain the U.S. share of agricultural markets in recipient nations.

The Food for Peace Program is a food aid and market development program operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service in conjunction with USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation.

Title I of the Food for Peace Program authorizes government-to-government concessional sales, which combine low interest rates and repayment terms of up to 30 years on financing to purchase specified U.S. agricultural products.

The supply period is fiscal 1992. Purchase authorizations will be announced as issued and sales will be made by private U.S. traders on a competitive bid basis.

For more information, contact Jim Higgiston or Todd Drennan at (202) 720-5319. For operational details call (202) 720-5780.

Rebecca Broeking (202) 720-0328

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NEW DAIRY PROCESS SIMULATES HUMAN BREAST MILK

WASHINGTON, June 4—Cow’s milk can be made more like human breast milk in a new process being patented by a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

John Woychik, a USDA chemist, said the new form of cow’s milk is

easily digested by infants without causing an allergy linked to milk protein.

Now, he said, cow's milk can be cooled and microfiltered to separate proteins in one continuous step at a cheese-and-dairy-product facility. That is in contrast to costly separate batch procedures that would be required to change cow's milk to produce the desired infant formula composition.

“Cow's milk and human breast milk differ significantly in protein concentration and composition,” said Woychik, with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. “It's these differences that make human milk more nutritious and more easily digested than cow's milk.”

For example, cow's milk contains about 3.5 percent protein, compared with 1.2 percent protein in human milk, Woychik said. That higher protein content can now be easily reduced to the level in human milk.

One of the proteins known as Beta-lactoglobulin needs to be minimized in cow's milk because it is chiefly responsible for an infant's milk-protein allergy, Woychik said. This protein is not found in human milk.

Woychik said the B-lactoglobulin content can be reduced to levels of 4 percent or less. That is done by adjusting the pH level and adding salt after filtering the milk proteins.

Also, cow's milk has several types of casein proteins. Only one of them—Beta casein—is found in human milk, he said.

Once the Beta-casein is separated and B-lactoglobulin reduced or eliminated, he said, the product becomes “an excellent protein base to produce infant formulas that best simulate human breast milk.”

Any type of cow's milk—regardless of breed—can be used in the new process, said Woychik. He worked out the process at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia.

His technique involves cooling milk to about 39 degrees Fahrenheit for about 16 hours. He said the proteins desired in the infant formula pass through synthetic membranes when filtered in a technique called molecular filtration.

“The milk components that don't pass through the membrane can be incorporated into cheese or other dairy products,” he said. “And, separation is achieved without the addition of hazardous or toxic chemicals, resulting in products that are safe.”

Using the technology, Woychik said dairy industries can tailor existing membrane filter methods used to make cheese and other dairy products for continuous production of simulated human milk proteins.

Ann Whitehead, coordinator of ARS' patent and licensing program, said several companies are interested in licensing Woychik's invention.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 504-8739

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USDA RELEASES STUDY ON THE NORTH CAROLINA GYPSY MOTH ERADICATION PROJECT

WASHINGTON, June 5—An environmental assessment for the gypsy moth eradication project in North Carolina was released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The document supports APHIS' findings that the methods employed to eradicate the gypsy moth will have no significant impact on the human environment.

A copy of the document is available for public inspection at USDA, rm. 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Copies may be obtained by contacting: Tom Flanigan, Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS, USDA, Room 642 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782; telephone (301) 436-8247.

Beth Hulse, (301) 436-4892.

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AGENCY INDUCTS THREE SCIENTISTS TO HALL OF FAME

WASHINGTON, June 5—Three scientists will be inducted June 9 into the Agricultural Research Service's Hall of Fame for 1992. ARS is the chief research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Entomologist Raymond C. Bushland of Kerrville, Texas, poultry geneticist Lyman B. Crittenden of East Lansing, Mich., and corn geneticist Arnel R. Hallauer of Ames, Iowa, are all retired from ARS.

"These scientists have made contributions with major impacts on agriculture in this country and around the globe," said ARS administrator R. Dean Plowman. "Their expertise is still sought in the scientific

community. Younger scientists would do well to set similar goals in their careers.”

Plowman will present plaques to Bushland, Crittenden and Hallauer in a ceremony at Washington. Other plaques citing their achievements will be on permanent display in the ARS National Visitor Center in Beltsville, Md.

ARS scientists inducted into the Hall of Fame must be either retired or eligible to retire and must be recognized for excellence by national and international colleagues in the scientific community.

Bushland’s research contributed to eradication of the screwworm in the United States. He helped initiate studies in 1950 that led to a widescale program to sterilize male flies of the livestock pest and release them to mate with normal female screwworm flies. Since no offspring resulted from these matings, screwworm populations declined. Elimination of the pest is estimated to have saved the U.S. livestock industry \$10 billion.

Hallauer played a major role in developing seven of the 10 most popular breeding lines of corn used to produce hybrids in the United States. His contributions to quantitative genetics research have helped plant breeders around the world develop corn with a broader genetic base, reducing the crop’s vulnerability to hazards such as insects and diseases.

Crittenden led research on avian leukosis virus, a disease which causes decreased egg production in chickens. He was also responsible for a program which led to development of the first transgenic chicken. Crittenden is internationally recognized in the fields of poultry genetics, avian retroviruses, transgenic animals and genome mapping.

Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011

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USDA TO ESTABLISH EXTENSION PROJECTS ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS

WASHINGTON, June 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service today announced establishment of education and assistance projects on 29 Indian Reservations and tribal lands located in 21 states.

The \$1.5 million program will provide education and technical assistance to Native American communities through programs in agriculture, horticulture, 4-H and youth leadership, nutrition and health.

"These projects are a partnership with the Indian community, the State Extension Services, and USDA," said Extension Service Administrator Myron D. Johnsrud.

Extension experts will staff offices under the program on the following reservations and tribal grounds:

Alaska—the Doyon/Tanana Chiefs Region;
Arizona—the San Carlos Apache and Hopi Reservations;
California—the Hoopa Valley Reservation;
Florida—the Seminole Reservation;
Idaho—the Ft. Hall Reservation;
Minnesota—the Red Lake Reservation;
Mississippi—the Choctaw Band tribal lands;
Montana—the Blackfeet, Flathead, and Fort Belknap Reservations;
Nebraska—the Omaha and Winnebago Reservations;
Nevada—the Washoe, Shoshone, and Paiute tribal lands;
New Mexico—the Jicarilla Apache Reservation;
New York—the Cattaraugus Reservation;
North Carolina—the Cherokee Reservation;
North Dakota—the Ft. Berthold Reservation;
Oklahoma—the Muscogee Creek and Choctaw tribal lands;
Oregon—the Warm Springs Reservation;
South Dakota—the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations;
Texas—the Alabama-Coushatta Reservation;
Utah, New Mexico and Arizona—the Tri-State Navajo Reservation;
Washington—the Chehalis Reservation;
Wyoming—the Wind River Reservation;

For more information contact Hollis Hall, National Program Leader, Extension Indian Reservation Projects, Extension Service-U.S. Department of Agriculture, (202) 720-6506.

Charles Morgan (202) 690-3656

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FARM POPULATION DECLINE IN 1980s FOLLOWS LONG-TERM TRENDS

WASHINGTON, June 10—About 4,591,000 people, or 1.9 percent of the total U.S. population, lived on farms in 1990, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

“Changes over the 1980s show a continuation of the decline in the farm resident population over many decades,” said Daniel Sumner, USDA’s deputy assistant secretary for economics. “However, the 24.1-percent decline in the 1980’s was somewhat less than the rate of decrease in the 1970s.”

These and other findings on the U.S. farm and rural population are in a report released today by USDA’s Economic Research Service and the U.S. Commerce Department’s Census Bureau.

The farm population consists of people living on farms in rural areas; it does not include the relatively few farms in urban areas. Farms are defined as places that sold \$1,000 or more in agricultural products during the preceding year.

Measuring the farm population has become a complicated task, Sumner said. The farm population definition in this report is based on residence only. However, many people reside on farms but do no farm work and, increasingly, many farmers and farm employees do not reside on farms. For example, only two-thirds of all farm managers and operators actually lived on a farm in 1990.

To understand this new relationship better, ERS now publishes a series of periodicals reporting on people in households with income from farming, Sumner said. The latest report in this series, The Farm Entrepreneurial Population, 1990, is due to be published in late summer.

More information on the number, distribution, and social and economic characteristics of rural farm and rural residents is available in Residents of Farms and Rural Areas: 1990, Census Bureau report series P-20, no. 457. Copies are available through the Superintendent of Documents, U.S.

Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

For more information about the report, contact: Laarni Dacquel, USDA, Economic Research Service, (202) 219-0534; or Donald Dahmann, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, (301) 763-5592.

Judy Garza (202) 219-0512

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EXTENSION SYSTEM AWARDS \$10 MILLION FOR YOUTH AT RISK PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, June 8—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded \$10 million to state Extension Services to establish and continue “Youth At Risk” programs in targeted communities across the nation.

“Extension’s National Initiative on Youth At Risk targets the needs of the next generation of Americans,” said Dr. Myron Johnsrud, administrator of USDA’s Extension Service. “One of Extension’s goals is to expand its outreach to more youth, particularly to those who are most vulnerable because of poverty, lack of parental and community support and negative peer pressure.”

Youth At Risk programs are aimed at prevention and intervention rather than treatment. Funding is targeted to three areas: 1) after-school educational programs in child care settings; 2) collaborations among community organizations is to initiate and strengthen programs and services to meet the needs of high-risk youth; and 3) programs to enhance reading and science literacy.

This is the second consecutive year Congress has provided funds for Youth At Risk programs. In fiscal 1991, \$7.5 million in federal funds supported 70 projects nationwide. The \$10 million funding for fiscal 1992 will allow for the continued support of 68 of these programs, and for the creation of 25 additional projects.

One program to receive a second year of funding is located in the rural community of Greenville, Miss. Sixty elementary school children attend this after-school program designed to increase their reading skills and level of self-esteem.

“This program has helped lay the groundwork for these boys and girls to stay in school and graduate,” said Hiram Palmertree, director of the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service. “This may be their best, if not their only, chance to begin their climb out of poverty.”

Leah Cox Hoopfer, deputy administrator of Extension 4-H and Youth Development, said many new partnerships with the private sector and public agencies are being established as a result of this new funding.

The following new programs are expected to begin immediately:

(Alaska) Kuskokwim 4-H Fisheries and Youth Development Program; (California) Reading and Science Literacy for At-Risk Youth; 4-H AM/PM Club- Chula Vista; (Colorado) Roots and Wings—Redirecting Highest Risk Youth; (Connecticut) New Britain/Slade Middle School After-School Program; (Georgia) Calhoun/Gordon County Shuttle School Program; (Illinois) Youth At Risk School-Age Child Care and Family Enrichment; (Iowa) Postville Child Care Education—A Rural Model for Before and After School; (Kansas) Kids After School—Reno County; (Kentucky) Garrard County Child Care Program; (Michigan) All for One—Pattengill Area Reading, Math and Science; Say YES to Willow Run; (Minnesota) On the Move...For Minnesota Families;

(Missouri) Students Taking Academic Initiative for Reading Success; (Mississippi) 4-H Project SOARS; (Nevada) Building Communities of Support for High-Risk Youth in Isola; (Ohio) Community Councils for Youth At Risk—Cermont County; (Puerto Rico) Viegues Kids In Action for Science Education; (Rhode Island) CE School-Age Child Care Education; (South Carolina) CHOICES—Children Having Opportunities to Increase Changes; (South Dakota) Pine Ridge Youth Coalition and Center; (Tennessee) 4-H BEST; (Texas) Partnerships—ROPES; (Virginia) Bailey's Community "Making the Grade" Project of Fairfax; (Washington) Salishan Together for At-Risk Youth—STAR Youth.

The following programs will receive funding for a second consecutive year:

(Alabama) Assess and Address—Meeting the Needs of High-Risk Youth; (Alaska) 4-H Yukon River Fisheries Enhancement and Youth Development Program; (Arizona) Phoenix Coalition for Youth and Families; (Arkansas) SAIL; (California) School-Age Child Care Education; (Connecticut) New Haven Spaces Initiative; Bridgeport RISE; School-Age Child Care in Hartford; (Delaware) WCASA Community Partnership; Seaford Collaboration for Youth; (Florida) Focus on the Future—Enhancing Literacy through Technology Education and Career Exploration; (Georgia) Project KITE; (Hawaii) ACT; (Idaho) AfterSchool Adventures And Mentoring Program; 4-H Adventures Club; School-Age Child Care and Parenting Resources;

(Illinois) Youth At Risk School-Age Child Care and Parent Education Program for Aledo, Sherrard and Westmer Unit Schools and Communities; Computer Assisted Learning; (Indiana) Space Station Indiana; (Iowa) Model City/Woodland Willkie Literacy Project; Community Parenting Coalition Targeting High- Risk Youth; (Kansas) Responsive Educational Approach to Diversity; Caring and Collaborating Youth; (Kentucky) Literacy and Technological Literacy Priority Area; (Louisiana) Horizon Program—Collaboration with Other Youth Serving Agencies; (Maine) Strategies Developing School-Age Child Care and Education in Rural Maine; (Maryland) 4-H Adventure in Science;

(Massachusetts) Youth At Risk Programming in Worcester County; (Michigan) Literacy and Technological Literacy for Youth At Risk; (Minnesota) Project FINE; Youth Issues Education; (Mississippi) After-School Child Care and Education Project; (Missouri) 4-H Summer Adventure Club; The St. Joseph Youth Alliance—A Targeted Prevention/Intervention Coalition; (Montana) Native American Family; (Nebraska) 13 Days-13 Kids!; (Nevada) Choices and Challenges for Youth; (New Hampshire) Youth Opportunities Unlimited—A Comprehensive School-Age Child Care Program; (New Jersey) Camden City Community Garden; Bergen-Lafayette Up-Scale Project for Youth Ages 5-14; 4-H After-School Education in Newark Housing Complexes; (New Mexico) From Roots to Wings—Quay County Youth Partnership; (New York) “School’s Out” School-Age Child Care Program; “Make a Difference” Literacy Program for Youth; Rural Families Cooperative/After- School Child Care Program; (North Carolina) Wayne County 4-H High Risk Programming in an After-School Setting; (North Dakota) The Rural School and Community Development Project; (Ohio) Athens County Coalition Enhancement Project; Cleveland Peer Volunteer Development Project; Knox County After- School Day Care Program; (Oklahoma) Coalition for After-School Care for High- Risk Indian Youth; Home Visitation Program for Adolescent Mothers; (Oregon) Kid Konnection; Youth Development in the Timber-Dependant Community of Mill City-Gates; (Pennsylvania) Project Youth Educational Programs—Coatesville; (South Dakota) After-School Child Care;

(Texas) “The Rutabaga Project” 4-H School-Age Literacy Education for Hispanic Youth; School-Age Child Care and Education 4-H CARES Project; Making the Grade—Victoria; (Utah) Project CARES; (Virginia) Science and Technological Literacy Education or High-Risk Youth in Giles County; Strong Families/Competent Kids/Caring Communities;

(Washington) High-Risk Youth Programs; Family Focus School-Age Child Care Project; (West Virginia) Developing Youth Potential—Enabling Youth at Risk to Become Healthy, Productive, Contributing Adults; (Wisconsin) Youth Futures; (Wyoming) Healthy Infant-Capable Adolescent Project; Coalition to Address High-Risk Youth on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Tom Willis (202) 720-2047

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U.S. SPECIALISTS ASSIST RUSSIA IN DEVELOPING FOOD MARKETING SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, June 8—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan said today the U.S. Department of Agriculture is sending four teams of wholesale market development specialists to Russia this spring and summer to help that country stabilize and modernize its food marketing system.

“This technical assistance is designed to help Russia set up an efficient system of post-harvest handling, storage, and wholesale marketing and distribution of food products,” Madigan said. “Such a system will be an important component in the federation’s continuing progress toward developing workable free markets and a stable democracy.”

Madigan said team members are marketing specialists from USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service and the private sector. Members are chosen for their expertise in post-harvest handling and storage, wholesale food marketing, price discovery and information dissemination, and trading in commodity exchange markets.

AMS Administrator Dan D. Haley said each team will address problems identified by a group of AMS marketing specialists USDA sent to Moscow and Kiev in mid-February. These specialists were sent by the department in response to requests for assistance with food marketing systems in those cities.

Efforts of the four teams will be directed toward:

- Improving fruit and vegetable storage warehouse operations near Moscow to limit excessive product losses and to increase retail product diversity.

- Educating Russian farm leaders in proper post-harvest handling

methods and the need for adequate storage of commodities in production areas.

—Developing an effective price information collection and dissemination system for producers and buyers.

—Conducting a series of clinics on the components of commodity exchange trading such as rules and regulations of contracts, pricing, cash markets, and default and arbitration procedures.

“In the short term, addressing these four areas can help preserve as much of the current year’s production as possible,” Haley said. “Our longer term goal is to help the Russian federation set up a storage, marketing and distribution system for food products that will provide a good model for expansion throughout the federation.”

The warehouse storage team currently is in Russia. The post-harvest team left for Moscow on Saturday (June 6) for a two-week logistical trip and then will return in mid-August to provide on-site assistance until the harvesting season is over. The commodity market information team is scheduled to go to Moscow June 27. The commodity exchange team will travel to Russia some time during early summer.

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BREEDING IS KEY TO FEWER STOMACH WORMS IN CATTLE

WASHINGTON, June 9—Selective breeding may be the best way to reduce parasitic stomach worm infections in cattle until researchers can genetically engineer immunity into livestock, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

Louis C. Gasbarre, a microbiologist, said some bulls in breeding tests passed on to calves an “immune system highly effective against the worms.” In these calves, he said, “we found about 80 percent fewer worm eggs than in calves that didn’t inherit a strong immunity.”

The worms cost producers about \$300 million a year in medication and lost beef production, he said. Those losses could drop not only through breeding but also by medicating only the animals prone to infection. “Currently, producers may give every animal two to four anti-stomach worm drug treatments per year,” said Gasbarre of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

“Ultimately, we hope to identify the genes responsible for worm immunity,” he added. “It may then be possible to transfer the immunity to cattle by genetic engineering.”

In studies of a herd of Black Angus cattle, “we found that 15 percent of the animals are the source of 80 percent of the stomach-worm infections,” said Gasbarre. That means, he said, “farmers could select cattle for worm resistance as part of their long—term breeding schedule.”

Breeding could reduce stomach worms “below a level that causes economic losses,” said Gasbarre, who is based at USDA’s the Beltsville, Md., research center. Stomach worms keep cattle from gaining as much weight as they should.

Gasbarre and his colleagues at the ARS Helminthic Diseases Laboratory are working toward developing a test kit so scientists, breeders and producers can quickly and accurately identify those cattle with strong genetic immunity.

In one study, the researchers tracked worm infections in genetically similar cattle from an Angus herd in Maryland.

Calves sired by some of the bulls averaged as many as four times more parasitic worm eggs in their feces than other calves grazing alongside them. “The offspring of these bulls inherited from their sires a tendency to have high or low numbers of parasitic worm eggs,” Gasbarre said.

The scientists saw the same trend when the Maryland bulls were bred to cows from a different Black Angus herd in Florida.

In tests in both states, the researchers monitored the number of parasite eggs in the feces of calves turned out to pasture. After a few months, most of the calves had a relatively low 200 parasite eggs per gram of feces.

But as the grazing season wore on, as many as 1,000 eggs per gram showed up in feces of calves sired by bulls that had high egg counts. In contrast, Gasbarre said, calves descended from bulls with low egg counts still had 200 eggs or less per gram and, in some instances, less than 100.

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USDA PROPOSES MUSHROOM RESEARCH AND PROMOTION PROGRAM; SETS REFERENDUM

WASHINGTON, June 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is issuing a proposed order to establish a promotion, research and consumer information program for fresh mushrooms.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said USDA will conduct a referendum July 22 through Aug. 12 to determine if the order will go into effect. Persons who from July 1, 1990, through June 30, 1992, annually produced or imported an average of more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms may vote in the referendum.

Under the proposed order, the program would be administered by a council of at least four, and not more than nine, producer and importer members. As in existing USDA research and promotion programs, council members would be appointed by the secretary of agriculture from nominees submitted by the industry.

The program would be funded by an assessment of no more than one cent per pound paid by persons who annually produce or import an average of more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms.

Haley said the order incorporates provisions of a proposed rule which appeared in the Jan. 15 Federal Register and subsequent comments.

Referendum ballots will be sent to all eligible producers and importers by July 22. Those who don't receive ballots should contact Richard Schultz, Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2533-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-5976.

The proposed order and referendum announcement will appear in the June 10 Federal Register. For copies and additional information, contact Schultz at the above address.

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USDA REAFFIRMS DETERMINATION TO ERADICATE MEXICAN SCREWORM OUTBREAK

WASHINGTON, June 10—Mexican officials have committed \$2.5 million for rearing and dispersing sterile screwworm flies to combat recent reinfestations of screwworms in northern and southern Mexico, according to Jo Ann Smith, assistant secretary for marketing and inspection services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The announcement follows a joint meeting yesterday between USDA and Mexican animal health officials in Orlando, Fla.

“Mexican and U.S. officials are determined to eradicate screwworms from Mexico in order to protect the livestock populations of both nations,” Smith said.

Outbreaks of screwworms were reported in southern Mexico in January and in northern Mexico near Tampico, about 200 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border, in late April. To date 45 cases have been identified, 40 in four southern Mexican states and 5 in the northern State of Tamaulipas.

“USDA is dispersing 130 million sterile flies weekly over the infested areas, and Mexican officials have stepped up surveillance activities throughout the country, especially in the outbreak areas,” said Alex Thiermann, deputy administrator for international services with USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

“Rapid response to the situation has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of cases being found. However, we know by previous experience we may find additional cases within these areas for one or two more life cycles of the screwworm fly. We will continue to monitor the situation and stay in close touch with our Mexican counterparts,” Thiermann said.

Screwworms are a parasitic insect of all warm-blooded animals, particularly livestock, but can attack wildlife, pets and humans as well. The female screwworm fly lays its eggs on the edge of open wounds, and the developing larvae feed on the living flesh of the host. Screwworm cases are normally fatal if left untreated. Cattle imported from Central America are suspected of initially bringing the pest back into Mexico, which was declared “screwworm free” in February 1991.

Before screwworms were eradicated from the United States more than 25 years ago, they caused losses to U.S. cattle producers of millions of dollars annually. The cooperative program with Mexico has helped

Mexico eradicate the pest while greatly reducing the risk of screwworms again crossing the border into the United States.

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USDA ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN CATTLE INSPECTION

WASHINGTON, June 10—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will add meat inspectors to assure food safety at five meat packing plants operating under an approved quality control program, a USDA food safety official announced today.

“This will be one of a number of steps we will be taking to modernize cattle inspection,” said Dr. H. Russell Cross, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service. “After deliberating with Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan, we’ve based our initial improvements on recommendations released today by the external scientific review panel.”

The panel’s report concluded that beef products produced in plants operating under streamlined inspection procedures are of equal quality and safety as those produced under traditional inspection procedures. The panel also reported these inspection programs act as a catalyst to promote associated safety assurance programs, such as the Quality Control and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point program.

Secretary Madigan accepted the report today and gave it his endorsement. “It confirms my thinking that streamlined inspection at test plants is producing safe, quality beef for consumers,” he said. “But it also notes that improvements can be made. I have directed Dr. Cross to make the improvements.”

“This report should help dispel misinformation from critics, who often play on consumers’ fear in order to push their own agenda,” Madigan said. “I want to make it clear that USDA will not compromise the safety of the U.S. meat supply, which consumers have every right to demand and expect.”

Other actions to be implemented based on the report will include:

—Seeking comment from inspection field personnel on designs for future inspection programs;—Expanding FSIS inspection responsibilities to include contaminants not visible to the naked eye by using state-of-the-art technology;

—Adopting recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences; and

—Improving inspection training procedures.

The review team members are experts in the fields of public health, microbiology, food technology, animal science, veterinary medicine and quality control programs.

Dr. Cross announced the team of scientists on April 21 to assess the five cattle plants operating under the streamlined inspection system and three plants operating under traditional procedures. The team evaluated inspection procedures and products under both inspection systems.

Copies of the expert team's report are available by writing the FSIS Information Office, Room 1162-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250, or by calling (202) 720-9113.

Roger Runnigen (202) 720-4623

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USDA OFFERS COCHRAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM TO NIS COUNTRIES

WASHINGTON, June 10—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will introduce the Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP) this year in the newly independent states of Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

“Program participants will be able to help their countries develop the agricultural systems necessary to meet the food needs of their domestic populations, and strengthen trade linkages with the United States,” Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan said today.

The CFP provides short-term training in the United States for agriculturalists and administrators from the public and private sectors of middle-income countries and emerging democracies.

Training includes agricultural development, trade, agribusiness, management, and marketing. Participants will meet U.S. specialists and take part in field observations and industry visits, experience on-the-job training, and attend university courses and seminars.

Since its inception in 1984, the program has provided training for over 1,800 overseas agriculturalists and currently operates in 21 middleincome countries and emerging democracies.

USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development will administer the program in conjunction with USDA and State Department

officers in U.S. diplomatic missions in the new independent states of the former Soviet Union.

For more information, contact Gary Laidig, Room 3844-S, Food Industries Division, OICD, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250; telephone (202) 690-1734.

Laura Whitaker (202) 690-2796

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